

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMCONSUL IBADAN

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L IBADAN 0429

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV NI

SUBJECT: POLITICS SPROUT - ALMOST - IN YORUBALAND

SUMMARY: DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS THERE HAS BEEN A FLURRY OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN YORUBALAND THAT HAS RECEIVED WIDE COVERAGE IN THE PRESS. THE CONTROVERSY HAS BEEN OVER SUPPORT OR NON-SUPPORT FOR CHIEF AWOLOWO. PRESS REPORTING HAS NOW DIED DOWN FOLLOWING OYO POLICE COMMISSIONER'S REMINDER TO PRESS AND ASPIRING POLITICIANS THAT POLITICS AND PARTIES ARE STILL BANNED AWOLOWO DOWN SOMEWHAT BUT STILL HANGING IN.

1. NEWS COVERAGE OF THE CONTROVERSY STARTED MARCH 26 WITH A FRONT PAGE STORY ON CA MEMBER OLU AWOTESU, FROM AWOLOWO'S HOME REGION IJEBW REMO, WHO DECLARED HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH CHIEF AWOLOWO, WHO HE HAD FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY FOR 30 YEARS, SAYING HE OBJECTED TO ANYONE HAVING PRETENSIONS TO PARTY LEADERSHIP AND SAW HIMSELF AS PRESIDENT ELECT EVEN BEFORE THE PARTY WAS FORMED. ON THE SAME DAY, AWOLOWO'S PAPER, THE TRIBUNE, PUBLISHED A STINGING SATIRICAL POEM BY AWOLOWO HENCHMAN BOLA IGE ENTITLED ONITIRI - "R.IJMP." WHICH CHARACTERIZED ONITIRI AS HAVING DIED POLITICALLY. CHIEF SAMUEL A. ONITIRI WENT TO PRISON WITH AWOLOWO BUT IS NOW ACCUSED OF GOING WITH HIS ENEMIES SUCH AS AKINLOYE, AKINJIDE, AND AKINFOSILE.

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2. THE GOVT-OWNED IBADAN DAILY SKETCH ON MAR 29 PICKED UP THE STORY OF CHIEF A.M.A. AKINLOYE, CHARACTERIZED AS A "STRONG MAN" OF THE IBADAN PARAPO (YORUBA FOR UNION), AND HIS ATTACK ON UP-START BOLA IGE. AKINLOYE, FORMER FEDERAL MINISTER AND ACTION GROUP MAN, SAID HE WAS "FINISHED WITH CHIEF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO AND HIS CHORUS BOYS". IBADAN PARAPO IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN FORMED IN

1976 AND THE NUCLEUS OF A FUTURE POLITICAL PARTY WITH INTRA-STATE POLITICAL ALIGNMENT.

3. THEN ON APRIL 3 THE SKETCH CARRIED A NOTE ADDRESSED TO BOLA IGE FROM CHIEF ONITIRI QUOTING HIM AS SAYING HE DID NOT WANT TO GO TO PRISON AGAIN AND "WE HAVE NO ROOM IN LAGOS FOR A DICTATOR", OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO AWOLOWO. HE REFERRED TO A MEETING PRESIDED OVER BY AWOLOWO ON JANUARY 3 WHERE HE, ONITIRI, SAID AWOLOWO WAS "OBSESSED WITH THE THOUGHT OF BECOMING PRESIDENT BY ANY MEANS AND IN FACT HAS IMAGINED AND ASSUMED HIMSELF AS ALREADY IN OFFICE."

4. TWO DAYS LATER, THE INDEPENDENT LAGOS DAILY, PUNCH, SPLASHED IN BIG HEADLINES A REPORT OF A MEETING HELD APRIL 1 IN ADO-EKITI BY ONDO STATE POLITICAL BIG-WIG, FORMER WESTERN STATE GOVERNOR, MAJ. GEN. ADEYINKA ADEBAYO. LISTED AS ATTENDING THE MEETING WERE KNOWN ANTI-AWOLOWO MEN SUCH AS AKINJIDE, AKINFOSILE, ONITIRI, AKINLOYE (LATER DENIED), MRS. AKINRINADE, KOLA BALOGUN, CHIEF ABIOLA OGUNDOKUN, CHIEF GABRIEL AKIN-DEKO (ALSO LATER DENIED) AND ANOTHER FORMER GOVERNOR. THE SAME DAY, THE TRIBUNE QUOTED ANOTHER FORMER AWO PRISONMATE, J. LAWANSON, AS PROFESSING HIS CONTINUED LOYALTY TO AWOLOWO. BUT, EQUALLY IMPORTANT WAS THE STORY THAT THE OYO STATE POLICE COMMISSIONER UMOREN HAD REMINDED ASPIRING POLITICIANS, NEWSPAPERS, AND THE CITIZENRY IN GENERAL THAT THE BAN ON POLITICS WAS STILL ON AND SHOULD BE OBSERVED. UMOREN TOLD ME CONFIDENTIAL

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LATER THAT EVERYONE HAD BEEN MOST COOPERATIVE IN RESPONDING TO HIS SUMMONSES TO HIS OFFICE. HE HAD LAID DOWN THE LAW, NOT TO CEASE POLITICING, WHICH HE KNEW WAS GOING ON, BUT TO KEEP IT QUIET AND OUT OF THE PRESS.

6. HOWEVER, THE PUNCH TODAY CARRIES A FRONT-PAGE REPORT OF AWOLOWO ON A NON POLITICAL VISIT TO BENDEL STATE, SAYING HE WOULD CONTEST ELECTIONS FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN 1979.

7. CHIEF OGUNDOKUN TOLD ME AT THE END OF MARCH THAT THE YORUBA GROUP IN THE CA WAS 85 0/0 AGAINST AWOLOWO. HE SAID THIS GROUP THOUGHT A NORTHERNER HAD TO BE PRESIDENT AND MENTIONED AMINO KANO AND CIROMA AS THE LEADING CANDIDATES, WITH THE MILITARY KEEN ON CIROMA. OGUNDOKUN SAID CIROMA IS NOT PUSHING HIS CANDIDACY BUT IS WAITING FOR THE WORD. (FROM OTHER SOURCES, I LEARNED THAT THE OYO STATE ANTI-AWOLOWO GROUP SEES THIS SCENARIO AS PUTTING RICHARD AKINJIDE IN AS VICE PRESIDENT.) OGUNDOKUN ALSO SAID AWOLOWO ABORTED HIS FEBRUARY OYO STATE TOUR (LAGOS 1624) AFTER HE FOUND THAT HE WAS GETTING VERY LITTLE SUPPORT.

8. IBADAN PARAPO IS A PARTY OF YORUBA RICH ELITES WHO OPPOSE "SOCIALIST # , WHICH PUTS IT PRESUMABLY SQUARELY

OPPOSED TO AWOLOWO.

9. WHERE DOES ALL THIS PUT AWOLOWO? IT APPEARS THAT AWO HAS GONE TOO FAST TOO FAR. HIS ARROGANCE AND ASSUMPTION OF LEADERSHIP HAS NOT SAT WELL WITH MANY INFLUENTIAL YORUBA, AND HE IS NOT RECEIVING SUPPORT ON HIS TERMS, I.E. A PARTY LED BY HIMSELF WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PUTTING HIM IN THE PRESIDENCY. HOWEVER, HE IS STILL WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN AS PERHAPS NIGERIA'S MOST EXPERIENCED POLITICIAN. IT STILL MAY BE THAT HIS CANDIDACY MAY BE ACCEPTED IN THE END AND NOT NECESSARILY HIS PARTY. HE IS STILL A FIGURE TO BE RECKONED WITH AND MAY YET WIND UP AS PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA.
HOYT

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NOTE BY OCT: # AS RECEIVED; CORRECTION UPON REQUEST.

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL SUMMARIES
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Draft Date: 13 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, NI
To: LAGOS
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